

LOVE'S VAGARIES;

OR, THE

WHIM OF THE MOMENT.

A DRAMATIC PIECE

OF TWO ACTS.



BY

T. VAUGHAN, Esq.

AUTHOR OF THE HOTEL, AND OTHER DRAMATIC PIECES
IN PROSE AND VERSE.

"In amore hæc omnia insant."

TERENCE.

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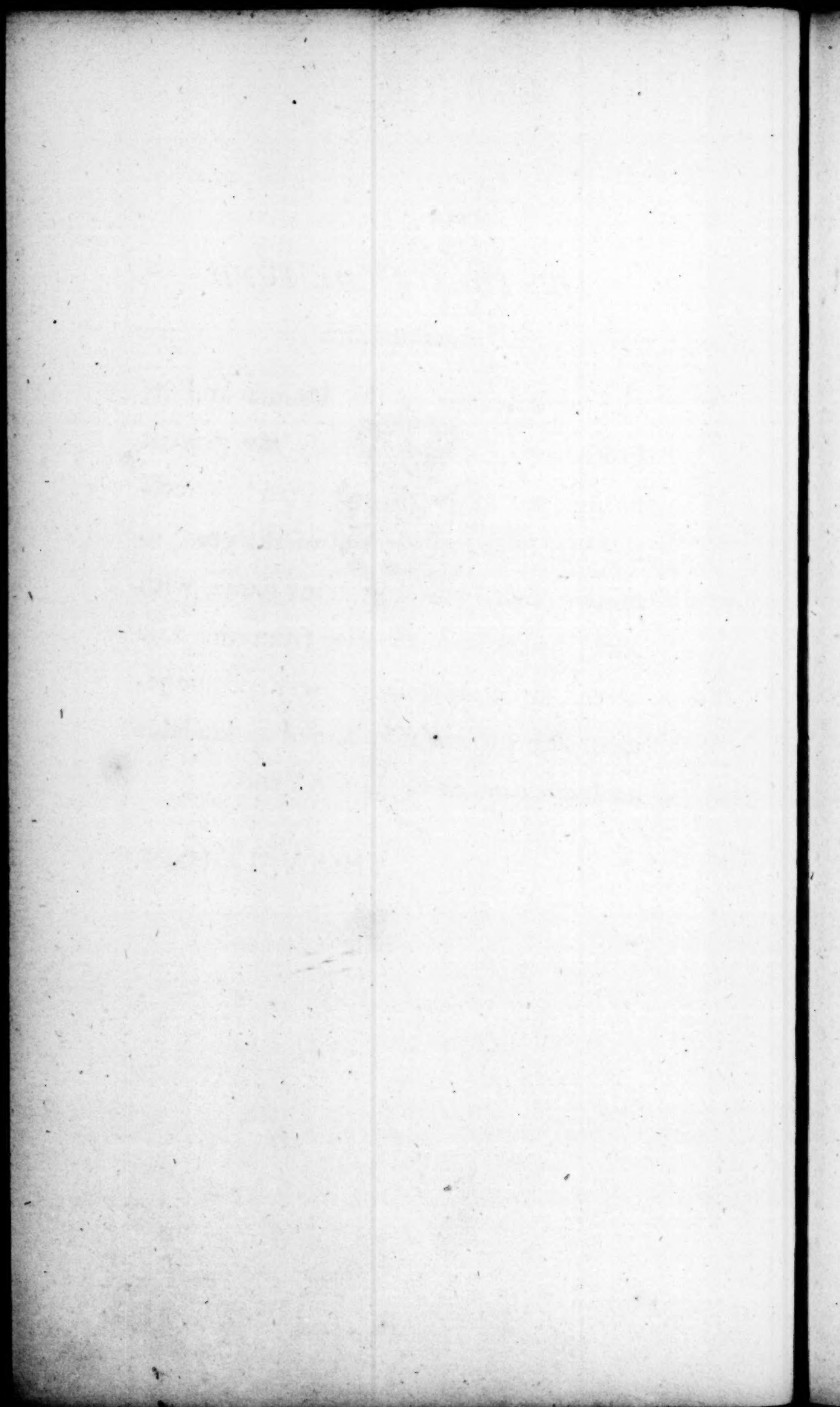
(PRICE ONE SHILLING.)



THE THEATRICAL FUND.

AS an Amateur of the Drama and its Professors, I cannot gratify my present feelings more satisfactorily, than by directing Mr. BELL, at the end of the year, to present their Treasurer, in my name, with such Profits as may arise from the Sale hereof, sincerely wishing every encouragement and success may attend so laudable an Institution as the above Fund.

THO. VAUGHAN.



PREFACE.

THE following Petite Piece is most humbly presented to the Reader, as rejected by Mr. KEMBLE, the Manager of Drury Lane Theatre, in the year 1789; and since rejected, in 1791, by Mr. COLMAN, Jun. Manager of the little Theatre in the Haymarket, although most flatteringly received by the Public, on the 15th and 19th of April, in the year 1776, when it was presented to, and brought out by the then Manager, for the Benefit of those celebrated Performers, Mrs. WRIGHTEN and Mr. VERNON. On which occasion the Author was not only honoured with an admirable Prologue from the Pen of Mr. COLMAN, Sen. but was complimented (to speak theatrically) with the full strength of the Company, as the Dramatis Personæ will shew. Yet was he under the necessity of yielding to the superior Judgment and decisive Edict of the above Gentlemen, TO WHOM, in most perfect good humour, the Author now takes the liberty of dedicating it, in full hopes, on some future occasion, to submit to them something more worthy their acceptance.

Should

*Should it be asked, why it was not brought out again the ensuing or some subsequent season at the same Theatre, the Author had other literary pursuits and engagements which then employed all his time and attention, and therefore laid it aside, where it would have quietly remained, but for the importunity and flattery of a Dramatic Friend, who, having formerly seen, and remembering it, pressed him to offer it, as above stated, which he accordingly did; but in the Theatre as in the World, it is not for mortals to command success: by endeavouring to deserve it, we may perhaps sometimes attain it.—
Hic est quod petimus.*

PROLOGUE.

Written by GEORGE COLMAN, *Senior, Esq.*

Spoken by Mr. KING.

WHEN JUPITER in frolic mood came down
To pay a visit to some country town,
He doff'd his Sunday habit of the skies,
And play'd the Amoroſo in diſguiſe :
He took the ſhapes of half the brute creation——
A very Harlequin for transformation :
To one he ſeem'd a bull, to one a ſwan,
To humbler ladies, a mere mortal man——
Was there a venal beauty to be ſold,
The God deſcended in a ſhower of gold ;
Gold the moſt ſecret paſſage can explore,
Untiles the vaulted roof, unlays the floor,
Unbars the window, and unlocks the door.

When Heathen Gods left off the amorous trade,
Ladies and Gentlemen choſe Maſquerade ;
Put vizors on their faces, cloak'd their hearts,
And play'd in Cupid's ſcenes ten thouſand parts.
Where is the boſom not ordain'd to prove
Each ſtrange caprice, and droll diſguiſe of love ?
Deny not, Ladies, what ye ſtrive to ſmother,
When with ſome maiden aunt, or prudent mother,
Like watermen, ye look one way and pull another.
POLLY ſeeming a coquette, with paſſion lingers,
Plays with the flame, and often burns her fingers ;
BESS, like a prude, extinguishes deſire,
Meanwhile her ſighs, like bellows, fan the fire ;
The Macaroni, with a heart of ſnow,
Talks of the flames that in his boſom glow ;
The fair, tho' in her breſt warm paſſions play,
Swears that her heart is very ſnow to-day,
That heart, like ſnow, to-morrow melts away.
Lover and Miſtreſs each by turns deceive,
Eager to cheat, and eaſy to believe.

The ſubject of to-night nor new nor rare is,
'Tis a young couple dancing *Love's Vagaries* ;
A Moment's Whim is all our Author means,
And fills with characters reverſ'd his ſcenes——
A mere mask'd ball, where *you* make half the treat,
Your own good humour ſeaſons all you eat.
Be not ſevere upon our ſportive play,
But let each Argus-critic ſleep to-day ;
To aſk for too much wit, is paſt all reaſon,
For wit at Maſquerades is out of ſeaſon.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir John Murray, the Father, - - Mr. JEFFERSON,
Colonel Murray, the Son, - - - Mr. DAVIES,
Dormer, the Lover, - - - - - Mr. KING,
Moody, Servant to Dormer, - - Mr. VERNON.

WOMEN.

Maria, Daughter to Sir John Murray, Mrs. SIDDONS,
Feather, her Maid, - - - - - Mrs. WRIGHTEN.

SCENE, LONDON.

LOVE'S VAGARIES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in Sir JOHN MURRAY's House.

Enter MARIA, followed by FEATHER.

MARIA (*angrily*)

THE liberties you servants take, seem to encrease with your present high wages.

Feather. High wages, no doubt, Madam, are apt to give high spirits ; and——

Maria. The sooner you lower them, then, the better, if you mean to continue with me ; for I will not retain any one in my service either so high spirited, as you call it, or so impertinent as to dare answer for what does not concern them.

Feath. But what, pray, Madam, could I say less than I did ?

Mar. What all servants ought—as they are directed, and no more ; instead of which, here have you been pertly entering into a business impossible for you to know.

Feath. How, Madam ! a marriage in the family and a servant not in the secret ! I'll venture to say there never was such a thing heard of.

Mar. Then you hear it now.

B

Feath.

Feath. Well, Madam, to be sure your's is the strangest family I ever lived in; for in a business of this nature, instead of making me your confidant, I am kept as ignorant and at as great a distance as if I was some poor dependant relation just come from the country.

Mar. Cease such discourse, or leave me.

Feath. But being a woman, Madam, like yourself, and judging there could be but one opinion in the affair, when my master, Sir John, ask'd me if I thought you was pleas'd with the approaching wedding, to be sure I did answer as if the case was my own, and told him yes—downright yes.—

Mar. And how could you dare to answer for my sentiments.

Feath. First, Madam, because I knew it would please my master; and secondly, because it is high time a lady of your youth, beauty, and fortune should——

Mar. Be at liberty at least to judge for myself. I think——

Feath. And yet, Madam, to be like a saint that nobody calls upon, is certainly contrary to——

Mar. Your feelings, I suppose, Mrs. Pert; but I will hear no more, and charge you never in future to judge my heart by your own.

Feath. If all hearts were open, I believe there would not be so much deceit in the world, or so few happy marriages.—Witness, Madam, our neighbour Lord and Lady Trifle, had they known each other's hearts a little better, Hymen, I believe had never lighted them to bed.

Mar. There is no guarding against your calumny, I see.—But no more such impertinence, I charge you; and should my father ever repeat his enquiries, see you rather

ther contradict than confirm what you have already so forwardly answered for.

Feath. Well, Madam, since it must be so, I will endeavour to keep up the character of a modern toilette attendant, by devoting my yes and no in future, entirely to your commands.

Mar. Remember then, I do not even wish my father to suppose me pleas'd with the match alluded to, lest he interests himself in what *may never happen*.

Feath. (*archly*) True, Madam—*may never happen*: but then does not the very doubt imply also that it *may* happen? As you cannot sure determine to reject Mr. Dormer, when he arrives—unsight, unseen.

Mar. As things are circumstanced, how can I determine any thing? perhaps we may not like each other when we meet; and it is the idea of being engaged to a man I have never seen, that at present distresses me—and yet to refuse an indulgent parent——

Feath. Well, Madam, but from what I have heard——

Mar. Heard!——Why, what have you heard? (*eagerly*).

Feath. That Mr. Dormer, Madam, is one of the most polite and best bred men in the world, handsome, witty, well made, good tempered, with all the flourishing requisites we read in newspapers, to render the marriage state completely happy. (*ironically*)

Mar. He may perhaps be all you have heard and more, and yet not appear either in my eyes; and if handsome, as you say he is, perhaps so much the worse.

Feath. How, Madam, if handsome so much the worse; that is an objection we women seldom make, I believe, at least not by my love calendar.

Mar. Perhaps so—but the handsome young men of the present age seem more enamoured of their own pretty persons, than the vainest of our sex, and devote more hours to that counsellor of the graces, their mirror, than the most antiquated Lord or Duke in Christendom. It is to the virtues of the heart I look for happiness in a husband.

Feath. Virtue, Madam, no doubt, is a tolerable good ingredient in that same bewitching thing called matrimony : yet I fear we must take a little of the vice of the age along with it, if we wish the balance in our favor. But here comes my master. [Retires aside.]

Enter Sir JOHN MURRAY.

Sir John. Maria, my dear, good-morrow—I bring you news I hope will please you.

Feath. (aside) He'll find my mistress not so easily pleased as he thinks, perhaps.

Sir John. My friend Mr. Dormer has just informed me, by letter, I may expect his son Charles to arrive here this very day, perhaps within an hour ; but something seems to have disconcerted you—be not alarm'd, my child, but tell me, why so grave ; you cannot sure be prejudic'd against a man you have not seen ?

Feather (advancing pertly up to Sir John.) But my young lady, Sir, has heard things which alarm and make her very uneasy—in the first place, she has heard that the young gentleman is handsome, and that you know, Sir, is so much the worse (*ironically*).

Sir John.

Sir John. Handsome—and so much the worse!—I do not understand you.—You are either mad, or turn'd fool.

Feath. Neither, Sir, (*curtseying*) it is my Lady's philosophy, I assure you ; I only study under her.

Sir John. But your pertness, methinks, seems perfectly original. (*Going up to Maria*) Be compos'd, Maria, and do not thus distress yourself without a cause—for though I acceded to Mr. Dormer's proposal of an alliance with our family, it entirely rests to be confirmed by a mutual liking between you when he arrives—or no signing, or sealing, believe me.

Feath. So, Madam, you see there's nothing in it—a mere question and answer does the business ; you like me, I like you, fetch a parson ; or, I hate you, you me, order my carriage. (*To be delivered quick and pert.*)

Sir John. Peace, Mistress Impertinence, if you please.

Mar. As you wish me then, Sir, to follow the dictates of my own inclination in this affair, permit me to put in execution an idea which just occurs to me, the better to remove my present apprehensions, and discover the real character of my lover, as we often distinguish the truth, even through the language of prejudice.

Feath. (*aside*) What invention now ? *Still waters, they say, are sometimes deepest.*

Sir John. Name it my child, and it is granted.

Mar. Mr. Dormer, Sir, you say, is hourly expected to make us a visit ; if I could but see him, and converse with him, without being either known, or suspected by him, I should be happy.

Feath.

Feath. (aside) A hint taken from some Novel, or French Romance, I'll be sworn for it.

Sir John. But, say, Maria, how is this to be contrived? for no doubt you have form'd your plan, before you thought of making the request.

Feath. (aside) Or she has less of the sex in her than I suspect, with all her gravity.

Mar. Suppose then, Sir, Feather and I change characters, it will be but a short masquerade frolic, and the purity of my intention, will, I hope, well justify it; I fancy we shall find no great difficulty in supporting our characters.

Feath. (aside) After all, no doing, I see, without a little of my assistance.

Sir John. If I consent to my daughter's request, do you think, Feather, you can, at all, sustain the character of a woman of quality?

Feath. There are certain things, Sir, we women know, as it were by instinct; besides, people of quality, now a-days, know every thing, without seeming to learn any thing—and I must have been dull, indeed, after being the attendant of my young Lady so long, not to know what belongs to a woman of fashion. There, Sir, (*walking about affectedly*) what think you of that? Is not that the thing to elevate and surprize?

Sir John. Ha! ha! ha! admirable!

Mar. I like the conceit well—it improves—

Sir John. Therefore lose no time, or you will have your lover here before you are ready to receive him.

Maria. My dress will soon be adjusted, Sir; come Feather. (*Going*)

Feath.

Feath. Mine, I fear, will not be adjusted either quite so soon, or easily; however, come Feather (*going first, to Maria*) attend me to my toilette—and do you hear, be sure you are attentive to my orders (*affectedly*) and not be the provoking, ignorant, impertinent girl—you know of (*imitating Maria's manner in the opening Scene of the 1st Act.*)

Mar. (*laughing*) I attend, and wait your commands, Madam. (*Going, meets Colonel MURRAY*)

Enter Colonel MURRAY.

Col. My dear little volatile sister, whither in such haste? I'm come to congratulate you on the news I have just heard of, in the expected arrival of the happy man, your lover.

Mar. Happy or miserable, my dear eccentric brother, my head and hands are too full of business at present, to give you one moment of my company; therefore let me go, I entreat you—my father will tell you all, adieu. Come, Madam, (*to Feather, leading in an affected manner*) I follow. [*Exeunt.*]

Col. What in the name of wonder, Sir, is all this?—Do explain. I am as impatient as a British soldier at the eve of an engagement, to know what it all means.

Sir John. I must first enjoin you to secrecy, honor and discretion.

Col. To all, most implicitly, Sir—they are a soldier's *sinè qua non*.

Sir John. You must know then George, Dormer, whom you have often heard me speak of, is hourly expected, to pay his addresses to Maria, but unknown to her, is coming in disguise.

Col.

Col. How, Sir, in disguise—a most whimsical way this, of forming the attack in a love engagement, I must confess.

Sir John. His father's letter, perhaps, will better explain the mystery, (*gives him a letter*) there read it. (*Col. reads*) "Dear Sir, as my son is rather delicate, perhaps
 "romantic in his ideas of love, he has obtained my per-
 "mission to wait on you as valet de chambre to his own
 "servant, who is to personate the master on this occasion,
 "the better, he says, to discover the real sentiments and
 "disposition of his intended bride; convinced of the
 "character of your amiable Maria, and relying on my
 "son's honor, to appear but a very short time in a charac-
 "ter so unworthy of him, I oppose not his wishes, of
 "which, tho' enjoined to secrecy, honor directs me to give
 "you this private information, that you may act as you
 "think proper, in either concealing, or communicating,
 "so whimsical an adventure to your fair daughter. I
 "am, dear Sir,

"Your sincere and obedient servant,

"HENRY DORMER."

Col. Whimsical indeed, Sir.

Sir John. Nor stops the whim here, George, for your sister, without knowing one syllable of young Dormer's intention, has actually entreated my consent, within this half hour, to assume a similar disguise, and she and her maid are now gone to exchange dresses on the occasion. What is your opinion? shall I, or shall I not, acquaint Maria with her lover's design?

Col. On no account whatever, Sir, let us rather respect the delicacy of the sentiment which inspired the in-

idea, as a woman's honour is always for guarding itself, and being a contrivance of an innocent passion, may not only lay the surest foundation for their future happiness, but afford me a most pleasant opportunity of rallying them both.

Sir John. True, George, and let the worst come to the worst, it is but a Lover's Vagary, or Whim of the Moment.

Enter MARIA dressed as FEATHER.

Maria. Well, Sir, (*to Sir John*) am I not completely metamorphosed, think you, for the purpose? And what say you, my dear Ranger of a brother, for I presume you are now let into the whole secret:—how do you like me in my new character?

Colonel. So well, my dear agreeable sister, that you will certainly conquer the valet at least—nor is it at all improbable but you may steal from your mistress the affections of Dormer himself.

Maria. Well, that would be delightful—and it would flatter me extremely to gain his heart in this humble appearance, subdue his reason, and compel him at once to declare his passion for a chamber-maid. In regard to his valet, I fear not his sighs, since my pride assures me, I am form'd more to inspire respect, than love, in such a fellow as that.

Col. Well, but softly my dear sister, that fellow, as you call him, will now look upon himself as your equal, remember that.

Sir John. And, perhaps, Maria, be making love to you in right earnest.

Mar. And the honour of being agreeable in his eyes,
C Sir,

Sir, may, perhaps, forward my very design; for as love, you know, brother, is a very talkative agent, he may prove a faithful 'squire to his master, and recount more of his life and adventures than I should otherwise be able to discover.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. A gentleman's servant below, Sir, desires to speak with you. (*To Sir John.*)

Sir John. Shew him up—Dormer's, I suppose, sent to inform us of his arrival. Where is Feather? (*To Maria.*)

Maria. At her toilette, Sir, dressing; and if I guess right, her looking-glass has already convinced her that we are very imprudent to trust Mr. Dormer to the power of her charms.

Col. And you, I suppose, Maria—but here comes the servant.

Enter DORMER, dressed as MOODY.

Sir John. (*Advancing towards him*) Well, friend—

Dor. My master, Mr. Dormer, Sir, sent me forwards with his best respects, and intends paying you a visit in person, as soon as possible.

Sir John. We shall be happy to receive him—he is well, I hope.

Dor. I have attended him for years, and scarce ever knew him better, Sir.

Col. (*To Maria.*) A smart fellow this—have a care of your heart, Feather.

Mar. My heart, Sir, knows its duty better than—

Dor. Be not displeas'd, Madam, I do not think my
self

self intitled to ask it the sooner, from what that gentleman is pleased to say.

Mar. I like your modesty well, Sir, and hope it will continue.

Sir John. Come, come, Madam and Sir are terms improper to be applied to persons in your sphere of life; therefore, as you are likely to live both in one family, you must condescend to know each other by your proper names; her's is Feather, yours——

Dor. Moody, at your service, Sir.

Col. Well, then, Moody, you may pay your adoration to Feather, if you please, but I shall not permit you to make serious love to her, as I flatter myself I have some little share in her good graces, so have a care.

Sir John. Come, George, we will go in and acquaint your sister with Mr. Dormer's message, and intended visit; in the mean time, do you, Feather, shew Moody his master's apartment. [Exeunt Sir John and Col.]

Dor. But before you execute those orders, Mrs. Feather, as we are expected, I find, not to stand upon so much ceremony after my master's arrival, permit me first to ask you, what sort of a lady this is he is coming to pay his addresses to? for if the Graces are like you, Venus could not shine much at her toilette.

Mar. I presume, Mr. Moody, by this beginning of yours, these are the customary fine things you gentlemen valets compliment every lady's maid you meet with on your travels.

Dor. In faith you wrong me, I assure you; I came with no such design; for though a valet, I am not over fond of your household deities; yet, from a something,

I know not what, I feel myself inclined to treat you with more than common respect.

Mar. (*ironically*) Indeed!—what a pity it is that I cannot be flattered by one of your cloth!

Dor. That is as much as to say now, you do not like my dress, I suppose.

Mar. Not in the least, believe me; for the future, therefore, we will remain friends, but leave love, if you please, intirely out of the question.

Dor. Never sure was a treaty proposed more unfortunate, as it consists of two impossible clauses.

Mar. And yet, like other unfortunate treaties, it must be carried into execution, I assure you.

Dor. And are you serious?

Mar. Most serious; besides, it has been predicted to me, by one of those itinerant Astrologers, called gypsies, that I should marry none but a person of fashion.

Dor. And I, none but a woman of rank, believe me, and were it not for the situation you seem to hold in this family, shou'd now think the prophecy fulfilled, for tho' I have not much faith in Astrology, I have much in the power of your charms.

Mar. But why, Sir, pay attention to a prediction which, in the present case, can never be realized?

Dor. Because, Madam, our senses are easily charmed where heaven has thus displayed its choicest wonders.

Mar. For whom, Sir, is this elegant compliment intended?

Dor. For you, Madam.

Mar. Me; good heavens! if so, it is time, Sir, I go execute my orders, and take my leave. (*Half going*)
That

That is the apartment designed for your master when he comes (*pointing to a door*). Should he at all be the resemblance of his master, my heart, I fear, will not hold out long. (*Aside.*)

Dor. If I mistake not, I hear his foot-steps coming this way, (*listens*) and here he is.

Enter MOODY dressed as Mr. DORMER.

Moody. Well, Moody, have you delivered my message, and taken care of the portmanteau, as I ordered you?

Dor. I have, Sir; and that I understand is your apartment, (*pointing*) as Mrs. Feather here, has been just informing me.

Moody. And pray, young woman, where is father-in-law, and my wife that is to be.

Mar. You mean Sir John and Miss Murray, I presume, Sir. I'll go acquaint them with your arrival.

Moody. Do so—but why don't you call him father-in-law, as I do?

Mar. Because it would be improper, Sir, as he is not so yet; and unless my father foregoes the rights of Nature, never shall. (*Aside.*)

Moody. Why there's nothing wanting to make him so but the ceremony, and that I hear passes for nothing now-a-days, amongst the great folk of quality; therefore, whether he is father-in-law to-night, or in the morning, the difference is not very great; however, you may go tell him I'm come, in what phrase you please; only be sure not to forget to tell my wife that is to be, I wish to see her too.

Mar. (*Going*) Good heavens, what a wretch!—how capricious is fortune; the die of these men's lives has
certainly

certainly taken a contrary cast, (*aside*) and it shall cost me dear but I break off this detestable match. [*Exit.*

Moody. (*to Dormer*) Well, Sir, (*self-sufficiently.*)

Dor. No—it is ill, Sir, did you not promise me to leave this ridiculous rustic manner of talking, and attend to the commands I gave you how to conduct yourself in this business? Why did I ever intrust you with the secret of my design? What's to be done? (*Seems agitated*) I had better give it up; your ignorance will discover all, and ruin the whole stratagem I am engaged in.

Moody. All I do, Sir, comes naturally to me—without study.

Dor. And Nature seems to have treated you like a very fond mother, by making you her darling child.

Moody. I am not the only one, I believe, Sir, in this great town, who does not know how to support the character of a gentleman.

Dor. Attend, Sir, to the orders I gave you, and be sure you say no more than is set down for you, as here comes Sir John, the father.

Enter Sir John.

Sir John. (*to Moody*) Mr. Dormer, I rejoice to see you, and beg a thousand pardons for my seeming delay, but till this instant was not informed of your arrival.

Moody. Time enough, Sir; but a thousand pardons are a few too many; one pardon for one fault, is enough, so take the remainder back lest you offend again.

Dor. (*aside*) Oh! heavens, what distress will not that fellow's ignorance bring me into; I'm upon the wreck every time he opens his mouth.

Sir John.

Sir John. I shall endeavour to render them useless, Sir, by never meaning to offend.

Moody. Aye, like enough ; but, pray where's my wife that is to be—no ceremony I hope, as I understand from father, all was agreed on before I came up, or perhaps, I should have made a little more haste.

Sir John. At present, Sir, she is dressing; in the mean time, therefore, suppose you go in with me and take some refreshment after your journey.

Moody. I care not if I do, the keenness of the air, I think, has given me an appetite.

Sir John. I'll shew you the way then, and your man there must take care of himself, by enquiring his way to the pantry.

Moody. You may trust him, he's an old traveller ; servants seldom want much pressing when the pantry or cellar's in the case. [*Exeunt Sir John and Moody.*]

Dor. (following) And now for the housekeeper's room, as the head quarters I mean to put up at, as best suiting my present design ; nor do I despair of making my charming Feather a little more communicative about this same mistress of her's, who must be angelic indeed, if she surpasses her maid : mine is rather a service of danger, I confess, yet, like other great politicians, I have gone too far to recede : therefore, friend Cupid, assist me in this Whim of a Moment. [*Exit Dormer.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE I.

Enter Sir JOHN, followed by FEATHER (new dressed).

Sir JOHN.

WELL, Feather, what great secret is this you so earnestly wish to communicate to me, of so serious a nature?

Feath. To explain, Sir, the present state of this serious business, that I may not hereafter incur your displeasure——

Sir John. This is being serious indeed. (*Ironically.*)

Feath. More so than you at first apprehended, I believe. Here, Sir, am I drest up like my lady, and neither you or I foresaw the ill consequences of it.

Sir John. And pray, Mrs. Feather, what are these terrible consequences which seem to distress you so exceedingly? (*Ironically.*)

Feath. Necessary, Sir, as it is to explain them to you, it is with the utmost difficulty I can overcome my excessive modesty, so far as to speak my own praises; but in short, Sir—I say, Sir, in short—I'm compelled to tell you, if your daughter does not quickly declare herself, her intended husband will not have an heart to give her, I believe; nor will I answer for another day's consequence, as flesh and blood, you know, Sir, is the composition

position we women are all made of, from her Grace to her Housemaid.

Sir John. Have you so mean an opinion of your lady's charms then, hussey, as to suppose——

Feath. Suppose! I suppose nothing more than that he's a man, and I'm a woman.

Sir John. And pray what then?

Feath. Then, Sir—why then—but as you seem not to have a sufficient opinion of the power of my charms, and despise the intimation and caution I give you, they shall blaze in full force, and then, perhaps, they may demand their sovereign rights from *some* people, *as well as another*.

Sir John. Oh! pray, let them exert their utmost influence.

Feath. The obstinacy of old folks, sure, is intolerable, (*Aside*). However, Sir, remember, should Mr. Dormer admire me to-day, he may adore me to-morrow; and a third interview, perhaps, leave you to lament the loss of a son-in-law.

Sir John. Were it possible your charms could be sufficiently attractive to persuade him to marry you, I think I might venture to promise you your wedding dinner on the occasion.

Feath. And stand god-father to——

Sir John. Yes, yes, to your first child into the bargain, whenever the event happens.

Feath. Say you so, Sir; then do I feel myself stepping into my vis-a-vis already—Here, John, Thomas, Harry, why, where are you all?—Heavens, what an idea!

Sir John. In idea only, believe me; however, pray en-

D

joy

joy it whilst I go and watch the signs and movements in the lovers' zodiac within. [Exit.

Feath. Well, the pleasures of imagination are something however. (*Walking about significantly.*)

Enter MARIA.

Mar. I rejoice, Feather, so favourable an opportunity offers to acquaint you, you must dismiss this ignorant ill-bred lover immediately ; it is an affront to my delicacy to have it supposed, for a moment, the daughter of Sir John Murray would listen to his absurd addresses ; and wonder much you could give him the least encouragement, as you could not suppose him a proper husband for me.

Feath. (*Peevishly*) Lord, Madam ! how can you tell what sort of a husband he is ? The shortness of the time——

Mar. Shortness of the time indeed !—how can you be so ridiculous ; was it not evident at first sight, that he is not two degrees from a natural. In a word, Feather, I never will have him, I am determined ; therefore, good Feather, as my father perceives my aversion to him, and seems purposely to avoid me, let it be from you he receives his dismissal, by telling him, though your hand was to consent, your heart never could ; and he will not, I think, after that, chuse to continue either his visits, or troublesome addresses.

Feath. (*Aside*) I'll never visit my lady, I'm determined. Lord, Ma'am, as to that, I see nothing in him so disagreeable, or——

Mar. I do, and that's sufficient ; but I scarce know which

which displeases me most, his ignorance, or your want of obedience to my commands.

Feath. Let me prevail on you, Madam, to take time, and consider on this matter, lest you repent when it is too late.

Mar. I have seen sufficiently enough, without taking time to increase my aversion ; therefore, no more, but see you instantly obey my orders in this affair.

Feath. (*Going, aside*) I never knew her so obstinate before. Obey her I must, or resign. [*Exit.*]

Enter Sir JOHN and the COLONEL.

Sir John. What, again grave, Maria—what new distress now ? Pray explain.

Mar. Occasioned, Sir, by Feather's strange behaviour.

Col. And are you sure now, my dear sister in disguise, were we to question you closely, that Feather is the only cause of the gravity so visible in your delicate countenance ?

Mar. (*Peevishly*) Is it not cause sufficient, think you, when the girl seems pertly to put on new ideas with her cloaths, and pay no attention to my orders ? Are you, brother, when a servant of yours refuses to obey any of your commands, usually in tip-top spirits on the occasion ?

Sir John. I am sorry, Maria, to find, what we intended as innocent mirth, has so far obliged you to descend from your real character, as to give that rascal of a servant an opportunity of prejudicing you against Mr. Dormer.

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Mar.

Mar. 'Tis impossible, believe me, Sir, to add to the natural aversion I entertain for him.

Col. And yet, had not a certain person assisted the growth of this aversion of yours, it had not been at this height so suddenly, I suspect.

Mar. (*Peevishly*) Really—and who pray, my wise brother, is this certain person? Pray explain.

Col. No, not while you answer in that tone of voice, my dear Maria.

Mar. It is because I am tired of my masquerade character, and if I have your permission, Sir, I shall lay it aside immediately. (*To her Father.*)

Sir John. Well, but Maria, as you assumed this disguise to satisfy your own doubts, I must now desire you to continue it a little longer to satisfy mine; and to suspend your prejudices against Mr. Dormer, by forgetting whatever that impertinent fellow of his may have insinuated, who shall instantly be dismissed for his impudence, and will myself go to his master for that purpose.

Mar. That, Sir, will be both cruel and unjust, as he has ever cautiously avoided making his master the subject of his conversation.

Sir John. His dismissal, is not the less necessary on another account—I have strong reasons to suspect he has conceived a most violent passion for you—and what can be more humiliating to a woman of real sentiment and delicacy, than the addresses of a footman?

Mar. Be assured, Sir, though he may consider me as his equal from the character I appear in before him, the distance I keep him at, prevents every possible liberty of that sort.

Col.

Col. (Aside) She little thinks, I believe, of the situation we unluckily saw her in as we just now passed Mrs. Comfit's, the housekeeper's room.

Sir John. How then came George and I, Maria, to see him on his knees to you as we passed a certain room window just now. Be assured, when a woman of fashion thus degrades her own rank, she stands degraded even in the eyes of him she stoops to; as your happiness, therefore, in this business, is all my concern, your complying with my request in not refusing Mr. Dormer hastily, cannot be too unreasonable a return for me to expect; let me not, therefore, be deceived in your accustomed duty.—Come, George, I have business of another nature to communicate to you within. [*Exit.*]

Col. I attend you, Sir. (*Going.*) To have her after all married to Dormer, as well from inclination as duty, will be perfectly dramatic. (*Aside.*) [*Exit.*]

Mar. What a distressing situation is mine! how every thing seems to conspire to make me wretched! I blush for the weakness of my own heart; deprived of that noble self-confidence unerring truth gives it, whilst I read the reproaches I so justly merit in the countenance of every one I meet. The commands of a father must be obeyed.

Enter DORMER.

Dor. My dear Mrs. Feather, your servant—I have been seeking you this half hour.

Mar. You have taken a great deal of pains then, I fear, to little purpose, as I cannot stay now I am bound, so your servant. (*Offers to go.*)

Dor. (Stopping her) Stop, I entreat you—I have something

something to communicate that concerns our masters nearly.

Mar. They then are the properest persons to hear it, and not me ; so once more, your servant.

Dor. (*Still holding her*) As joy increases by being revealed, I conjure you stop, and hear me ; and let the confidence I am going to place in you, be at once a proof of my esteem, and engage your secrecy. (*Offering to kiss her hand.*)

Mar. (*Angrily*) This liberty, Sir, is as impertinent as your expressions of esteem are troublesome.

Dor. Nay, be not angry, for you cannot sure but have observed how much I was struck with, and admired you from the first moment I saw you ; blame rather the hand that made you, than the man who loves you. Charms like yours, are as irresistible as they are attractive.

Mar. If this be your secret, I'll hear no more. (*Going*).

Dor. (*stops her*) You shall not leave me, but stay—and learn—I am not what I seem.

Mar. No, Sir ;—who then are you ? Pray explain.

Dor. Are we in private—shall we not be overheard ?

Mar. No---proceed.

Dor. Know then, that he who is now with your lady is an impostor.

Mar. How ! an impostor.

Dor. Yes—and a servant.

Mar. And you—

Dor. The unhappy Dormer, obliged to root from my heart the growing affection your beauty has implanted there.

Mar. (*Aside*) Sure there is a secret sympathy in the
affairs

affairs of love, or my heart could never have felt what it has—but I must not discover myself yet.

Dor. Desirous of observing my destined bride, unsuspected by her, my father permitted me to assume this disguise, and nothing but misfortunes seem to have accompanied the deceit. Obligated to marry a woman I cannot love—and love a woman I cannot marry; and to complete the catastrophe, your mistress is not only in love with the impostor, but even rejoices in her supposed nuptials.

Mar. (Aside) He little thinks my disguise has been equally distressing, but it shall not be long so. Your situation, Sir, is undoubtedly much to be pitied, and I hope your disguise will best apologize for any freedoms I may have been guilty of.

Dor. Of none, believe me; your excuses, therefore, but serve to remind me of those cruel difficulties which must separate us for ever.

Mar. And would you wish me, Sir, to think you serious in this declaration?

Dor. So much so, that as an engagement between us cannot take place, I will hence renounce every other, and rest happy in my love for you, whilst vanity shall flatter the dear idea of your not entirely hating me.

Mar. A heart thus seemingly devoted to one in my situation, Sir, would be well worthy of mine, were I in a more exalted sphere: but as I hear somebody coming, we must part for the present; we shall soon see each other again; when, perhaps, we may meet with less interruption.

Dor. Adieu—my best wishes, and my love attend you.

Mar.

Mar. (*Aside, going*) A fortunate discovery this—for master or man, by Cupid, he has me; but I will still have a little more diversion with him; my brother will enjoy it, and assist me.—I can but be caught at last.
[*Exit.*]

At opposite door—Enter MOODY (bowing.)

Moody. A word with you, worthy Sir, if you please.

Dor. Pleas'd, or not, I must hear it, I suppose.

Moody. I have a request to make your Honour.

Dor. Be brief then in making it, for my time grows precious, and circumstances critical.

Moody. Not more so than your humble servant, I assure your Honour.

Dor. Leave jesting, Sir, and proceed to your request, if you mean to have it granted.

Moody. Have pity then, I beseech you, Sir, on my good luck—but Madam Fortune has certainly fallen in love with me in this disguise.

Dor. I shall pass a ceremony upon your ill-timed mirth, you will not like, if you proceed thus. (*Angrily.*)

Moody. Mercy, Sir, how can I help it—if fools have fortune, and a lady chance to fall in love with me—

Dor. (*Aside*) As I suspected; but he must not see I know any thing of the matter. Hear me, Sir; if you dare but think injuriously of the lady, or presume upon my assumed character and name, beyond my orders, I will instantly discover myself, and kick you out of this house and my service together.

Moody. I wou'd fain save you that trouble, your Honour; but how, if the young woman, knowing me in my own proper

proper person, should continue her liking, you would not sure, have her die for love of me?

Dor. But as I do not think the lady's disease so desperate, I shall not concern myself about the remedy.

Moody. Your Honour knows love is common to all—and if my cape and my cuffs, being of another colour from my coat, are no bar to preferment, I hope your Honour will not forbid the banns.

Dor. I'll hear no more—but away and execute the commands I gave, and see you do not go one step further——

Moody. I am gone, Sir.—I'll e'en venture, however, to declare myself to her, (*aside*) come what, come may.
[*Exit.*

DORMER alone.

And now for Feather—whom I will go and consult on the best means of extricating myself from my present embarrassment. (*Going.*)

Enter COLONEL.

Col. Friend Moody, I have something to say to you.

Dor. Your commands, Sir——

Col. Report says you make love to Feather.

Dor. Who, Sir, that has a heart to love, can see a form so amiable, and be free?

Col. And is she grateful for the good opinion you entertain of her—be free and tell me; for you have an understanding above that of a common servant, and I would fain know whether you love her or not.

Dor. Pardon me, Sir; but I cannot possibly see how you can be at all interested in such a confession, even supposing her partiality answered my fondest hopes.

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Col.

Col. Your language on the occasion seems very refined, and far above your situation—you would imitate, I presume, the language and manner of a Man of the World.

Dor. By no means, Sir; these, I fear, are not times for imitation; but you seemed to speak of my attachment to Feather as if displeased at my passion for her.

Col. Were it possible, from that tone of voice I should think you were jealous of me—perhaps you are so.

Dor. I entreat you, Sir, not to press me further.

Col. Drop then this ridiculous pursuit, I charge you, or I shall be seriously offended—not that I have the least reason to suppose she would listen to *your* addresses, since she is insensible and deaf to *mine*—but I love her tenderly, passionately love her—and I cannot bear the mortification of having a footman for a rival—But enough; here comes your master and my sister: if you are wise, remember what I have said to you.

[*Exit* Colonel.]

Dor. If so, I'll immediately away to my wished for conference with Feather.

[*Exit.*]

Enter MOODY and FEATHER.

Moody. This condescension of yours, Madam, is more owing to your goodness than my deserts; and I cannot sufficiently thank you for your acceptance of one so—

Feath. Indeed, Sir, you over-rate my merits, and your thanks are much beyond the obligation I confer.

Moody. That's as much as to say, I suppose, you have more pleasure in obliging than being obliged.

Feath.

Feath. Sir, your modesty distresses me.

Moody. (*Aside.*) This is a charge seldom brought against any of our cloth, I believe.

Feath. In a word, Sir, I think your affection an unmerited honour, and should prefer your love alone to a Nabob's fortune without you; and I know myself too well not to——

Moody. And I know myself too well not to——

Feath. So much humility, Mr. Dormer, is unnatural—why do you continue speaking thus humbly of yourself? I shall not think you in earnest, if you persist.

Moody. Ah! Madam; fine feathers, they say, make fine birds, and fine clothes may cover a——

Feath. How, Sir—fine clothes may cover a——, there's a double meaning, I fear, in all this; do, Sir, explain—those clothes cover Mr. Dormer, do they not?—Or who are you?—Perhaps (*aside*) an impostor, like myself.

Moody. Simply then, Madam, his and your very humble servant; a mere counterfeit guinea, with a tolerable good impression, that is all.

Feath. Oh! heavens, how have I been deceived then! where's my vis-a-vis and servants now—Oh! support me——(*fainting.*)

Moody. (*Supporting her*) Nay, never take on thus, Madam, since my love, you know, is better than a Nabob's fortune without it, and faith and troth I do love you, and heartily too, and so you shall find, if we but come together; for though my name is changed, my face is the same, and I never quarrel about spelling a letter or two more or less.

Feath. (*Recovering*) Where am I?

Moody. Where, not half a minute ago, you would have wished to have been—in my arms.

Feath. O! spare my blushes, and let me retire.

[*Exit.*

Moody. So, so—I wish this discovery may not oblige me to undergo the ceremony my master was speaking of; and not administered with a dead man's arm neither. I had better, I believe, retire before he appears; for yonder I see him coming, and with him my property, if every one had their own, and we were both in our right place. Methinks I begin to wish myself plain Moody again, finding as how I have not the impudence of my betters to appear what I am not.

[*Exit.*

Enter DORMER and MARIA, meeting.

Dor. (*Advancing*) Amiable girl, surely you are deserving of my tenderest affection; how unfortunate the Colonel's previous attachment to you.

Mar. (*Half serious*) I am glad I have met you, Sir, in order to impart the result of my conference with Sir John.

Dor. Well, charming Feather, I am all impatience to hear the success; do not longer keep me in suspense.

Mar. There is no persuading him, I find, to defer the wedding; he is determined to have it carried into execution, in part, this very evening. The lawyers are to meet here within this hour for the purpose; you cannot, therefore, longer keep your real name a secret.

Dor. I do not mean it—on the contrary, shall explain the whole affair, in a letter I intend leaving for Sir John, on my departure from hence.

Mar.

Mar. (*Aside.*) Departure—Oh! Heavens, he will not sure attempt it—but I'll try him. 'Tis the only step I can advise you to, Sir——(*With seeming indifference.*)

Dor. How—advise—and do you really advise my departure?

Mar. No doubt, Sir---and so your servant——(*As going.*)

Dor. (*Stopping her*) You must not, shall not leave me thus---for though I detest Miss Murray, and never will fulfill my engagement with her, there is a distress hangs heavy at my heart, I fain would communicate to you, but dare not---and yet tell me---does not the Colonel love you? (*Eagerly anxious.*)

Mar. Well, Sir, suppose he does, what then?

Dor. And you, no doubt, return it---if so, do not trifle with my anxiety, but tell me what is your determination in this affair.

Mar. I don't know.

Dor. The answer is honest—you don't know.

Mar. No. What would *you* advise me to do?

Dor. I advise you, if he is serious, to accept him for an husband.

Mar. Is that your advice?

Dor. Yes.

Mar. In good earnest?

Dor. Even, so the choice is good, and worth attending to.

Mar. Well, Sir, I take your counsel.

Dor. (*Agitated*) You will have no difficulty in following it, I believe.

Mar. Not more than you in giving it.

Dor.

Dor. I give it to please you, Madam.

Mar. And I follow it to oblige you, Sir.

Dor. How fondly I deceived myself, when I imagined I was not wholly indifferent to you—(*greatly agitated*) but of that no more.

Mar. True, Sir, we will therefore no longer dwell on that subject. You told me frankly that I ought to accept the Colonel's offer, and I tell you, I shall do so only because you advise it as best.

Dor. Do not excuse yourself upon my advice in this affair; your resolution was made before I heard of it, and as circumstances now are, the sooner an explanation takes place with Sir John the better—the desire of overcoming my unfortunate passion, and the eagerness your looks express for my departure, both conspire to render my absence perfectly necessary.

Mar. (*Smiling*) And pray who informed you that I either returned the Colonel's love, or was glad at your leaving me?

Dor. (*Seizing her hand*) On my knees, then, I conjure you, by all you hold dear, do you love me?

Mar. What! answer such a question to a man just on his departure!—No, no: my love is reserved for the present, not for the absent man.

Dor. Here then will I kneel, till you accept my hand and heart devoted to you; nor will I rise, till you consent to be honourably mine.

Mar. What! with no other prospect before us than the melancholy one of your father's resentment!

Dor. Yes—we must please ourselves in life—and the happiness of possessing you is, in my esteem, the fairest of all fortunes—'tis what I would fix my whole ambition

ambition on ; and at sight of beauty like your's, my father's keenest reproaches will instantly soften into complacency and consent, while your merits, superior to those worldly phantoms, birth and fortune, will plead angel-tongued in favour of my disobedience. (*Kneeling.*)

Enter Sir JOHN, COLONEL, FEATHER, and MOODY.

Sir John. How's this—on his knees again to you?

Mar. Yes, Sir : and as you wished me the wife of Mr. Dormer, you are come most happily to witness how I rejoice in my obedience.

Dor. (Rising) What's this I hear—Sir John your father!

Sir John. Even so, believe me Sir, and this (*pointing to Feather*) only her waiting woman ; and happy am I in having such a gift to bestow on you ; and may the present be the only deceit you ever practise on each other.

Feather. (Aside) My reign, then, I fear is on the decline.

Moody. (Aside) And with it your fainting fits, I hope.

Mar. Judge then of my sentiments, Mr. Dormer, by your own, as the same idea seems to have engaged us in our present embarrassment, and think how highly I must value that heart I have taken such pains to discover.

Col. Nor think I love her less than when you thought me your rival, Sir ; as her brother, therefore, I am entitled to your pardon, for my behaviour to you as Moody.

Dor. I rejoice Colonel, at the opportunity of giving it you upon the terms of friend and brother-in-law.

Sir

Sir John. By a letter from your father, Sir, I was prepared to receive you in your disguise; and seeing All's Well that Ends Well, suppose we finish the Whim of a Moment with a supper and a dance within.

Dor. With all my heart, Sir, (*to Maria*) and as to our worthy Master and Mistress there, (*pointing to Moody and Feather*) if they but follow our example, they shall not be left out of the set.

Col. And as Lord of the Manor, Feather, upon the occasion, perhaps I may claim the first dance with you.

Moody. (*To Feather*) What say you, fellow servant?—seeing you are no better than other folks, will you accept the hand and heart of an honest man:—the richest Nabob of them all cannot boast a better fortune.

Feath. Agreed, and the first boy with my mistress for a year's wages. (*Taking him by the hand.*)

Sir John. Why that is spoke like a true English girl of spirit, and a return he well merits from you for not deceiving you when he had it in his power; and the wedding dinner I promised you shall be forth coming on demand.

Mar. To which, Feather, I already invite myself.

Dor. As do I.

Col. And I.

Sir John.

Yet what avails our present comic-banns,
Unless promoted by YOUR joining hands;
Which to our Whim, will give such flattering force,
None here will ever sue for a divorce.

FINIS.

